

By **STUART EARP**; Wycombe Wanderers 1, Walton and H. O
WITH two defeats at Walton behind them, Wycombe Wanderers could have been forgiven for being somewhat pessimistic on Saturday when they faced the Amateur Cup quarter-finalists for the third time this season. Both Delaney and Rundle – their recent centre back combination – were injured, leaving Dave Bullock and Rob Williams to face one of the best attacks in the Isthmian League.

Wycombe's answer to it all was one of their most determined displays on the season. Every player put in 100 per cent effort and some even more, Bullock in particular who played by far his best game for the Blues.

In the club programme notes, two articles mentioned Wycombe's string of defeats by the odd goal with special relevance to last week's loss at Leatherhead. For once the luck was with Wycombe and they were able to reverse that dreaded 0-1 scoreline, thanks to a goal by Brian Langfield.

Their slice of luck came near the end when Somers netted for Walton but referee P. J. Drewe disallowed the effort for pushing. For the most part though, Wanderers triumph was due to endeavour rather than fortune.

Only one thing spoiled the moment of glory, however – the booking of Rob Williams. A professional foul that almost certainly saved a Walton goal was the offence and it meant that Williams has now had his name taken four times this season. Having successfully appealed against one of them in October, Rob now faces the prospect of suspension.

Neat work by Gamblin got Wycombe off to a promising start after only two minutes when his deep cross was sent only just wide by Larry Pritchard and with Brian Langfield finding space, the visitors defence was well stretched.

Walton's main danger seemed to come from set pieces where Somers and Connell lurked menacingly, but neither player could find the freedom they enjoyed in the previous encounters. With Bullock and Williams challenging at every opportunity, they were given no time to lay the ball off with their normal accuracy.

Without the drive of skipper Dave Bassett (under suspension) Walton lacked bite in midfield as was demonstrated after half an hour when Willie Smith was dispossessed in midfield. The ball moved swiftly to Tony Amos, but with two men inside him, he tried

a shot himself which Teale saved well.

Five minutes later, only Teale's bravery halted Wycombe when Dave Donaldson slipped in challenging Langfield. Brian took the ball to the edge of the area before Teale dashed out and flung himself at the forward's feet.

But although Wanderers had the major slice of possession, they were unable to maintain any concerted pressure on the Walton net and just before the interval a flash of skill from Roger Connell almost brought a breakthrough.

Beating two defenders, Connell spotted Maskell off his line and sent in a curling lob which only just cleared the crossbar with the keeper struggling to make his ground.

The same rather dour brand of football continued in the second half. Poor distribution by both sides meant many attacking moves were prematurely broken down and the referee's reluctance to use the advantage rule put the seal on flowing football.

The Williams incident occurred in the 62nd minute when Walton beat the Wycombe off side trap for about the first time. Connell

homed in on the Wycombe goal, with only Williams in with a chance of catching him. Coming in from behind, Rob brought down the Walton striker illegally and was booked.

It was all soon forgotten, however, when Wanderers took a deserved lead seven minutes later with a classic move.

Chasing a pass that many would have given up Tony Horseman resisted Thomas' tackle and crossed from the by-line. Teale, at the near post, was caught in no man's land as Langfield nodded the ball down hard and true into the back of the net.

The goal was the signal for an all out assault from Walton. In the 72nd minute Somers escaped from Bullock for just a few seconds but powered a drive around Maskell's post and with Pritchard fading, Walton tightened up in midfield and forged forward.

Mick Hollifield came on for Horseman after 78 minutes but saw precious little of the ball as Wycombe resigned themselves to defence. Somers seemed to have rewarded Walton's pressure in the 81st minute when he headed powerfully into the net from Smith's corner, but the "goal" was disallowed for pushing.

It was during the last ten minutes that Bullock really came into his own. Always making himself first to the ball, he ensured Somers was given no other chances to show his talents. Dave even had time to block one scorching drive from Colin Woffinden with two minutes left, a shot with such power it would have laid out many another player!

But nothing was going to deny Wanderers their glory on Saturday and with every player fighting to the final second, they held out for one of their best victories of the season.

WYCOMBE: J. Maskell, P. Birdseye, R. Williams, D. Bullock, D. Gamblin, A. Gane, L. Pritchard, J. Hutchinson, A. Horseman (sub. M. Hollifield 78 mins.), A. Amos, B. Langfield.

WALTON: R. Teal, R. Thomas, C. Lambert, D. Donaldson, W. Edwards, D. Morris, C. Woffinden, W. Smith, R. Connell, K. Somers, C. Foskett, sub T. Dudfield (not used).

Attendance: 1,385.